## Ellicott City Watershed Master Plan

## Ellicott City Watershed Master Plan Frequently Asked Questions and Responses

This periodically updated FAQ provides general information about the Ellicott City and the Tiber-Hudson Watershed master plan. While it is meant to inform residents, business owners, and other stakeholders, it is NOT an exhaustive resource. If you need additional information please contact the Department of Planning and Zoning at 410-313-2350.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

Q: What is the scope of the master plan?

A: The master plan will take a fresh and creative look at long term flood mitigation strategies, land use, downtown parking, business/retail marketing strategies, urban design and placemaking, and transportation. Most importantly, it will define funding and implementation strategies and address Ellicott City at a watershed level in a way that many traditional master plans do not do. The result will be a comprehensive, community-driven vision for rebuilding a stronger and more resilient Ellicott City.

Q: What topics are outside of the master plan scope?

A: The master plan will take a long-term, comprehensive view of big-picture planning strategies. It will not address day-to-day questions about development review, or personal concerns about individual building permits and code enforcement. If you have questions about building permits please contact the Howard County Department of Inspections, Licenses, and Permits at 410-313-2455. For code enforcement or zoning questions, or if you're not sure who to talk to, contact the Department of Planning and Zoning at 410-313-2350.

Q: How will existing studies apply to the master plan?

A: Studies undertaken before and after the July 30 flood are currently informing the master plan. A key one is the recently completed Hydrologic and Hydraulic study (H&H study) for the Tiber-Hudson watershed, which includes Ellicott City.

The H&H study is an unprecedented comprehensive analysis of computer simulations that modeled flood mitigation efforts, such as storm water management ponds, widening or straightening stream channels, and underground water storage facilities. The model shows how such efforts could help alleviate flooding on Main Street and elsewhere. The model will be used throughout the master plan process to help set planning parameters, test choices, and guide decisions. In addition, the Army Corps of Engineers is undertaking a study that will provide examples of floodproofing buildings in Ellicott City. The full list of studies being reviewed for the master plan is available on our webpage: www.howardcountymd.gov/ECMP.

Q: If the H&H study is an important tool why didn't the initial model runs address the following:

1. Changes to the arch bridge under Main Street.

A: Changes to the bridge would significantly impact existing streets and buildings and given the limited effect it would have in respect to the other projects being considered, it was not considered as a major project in the first model runs; however, it will be further evaluated during the master plan.

2. Using Parking Lot D to store flood water.

A: An objective of the H&H study was to reduce the volume of flood water before it reached Lot D. Lot D could function as a flood storage area, and we will look to further evaluate the potential uses of Lot D as part of the master plan.

Areas outside the watershed.

A: Since the H&H study is focused on mitigating floods in Ellicott City, testing areas outside the watershed are beyond its scope and purpose.

4. Fully mitigating new development.

A: "Full mitigation of new development" is defined as managing the volume of storm water caused by a 100-year storm, which is the current requirement for all new projects in the watershed.

Q: How will decisions get made about which capital improvements to undertake?

A: The County will continue to explore the feasibility of improvements identified either in the H&H Study or master plan, and, as discussed in previous public settings, the County will prioritize projects that work to make Ellicott City a model resilient community. As we move into the master plan planning efforts, the community will certainly have an opportunity to continue to share, review, and assess different project ideas.

Q: What is the role of the Master Plan Advisory Team and who participates in this group?

A: The Master Plan Advisory Team (MPAT) has 11 members and includes residents, business owners, property owners, and non-profit representatives; appointed by County Executive Allan H. Kittleman. They will advise the consultant team and County staff on the planning process and be a sounding board for emerging ideas and concepts. The MPAT will review and provide input at key intervals, offer advice, and also serve as a liaison to the community.

Q: Will additional modeling of the watershed be conducted?

A: Yes, additional modeling will be done to test alternative concepts and ideas identified as part of the master plan and the results will be shared with the public.

- Q: What measures can individual property owners/residents in the watershed take to help with flooding?
  - A: Howard County's <u>Flood Protection webpage</u> provides valuable information about the County's efforts to deal with flooding, including a section about 'Flood Protection Measures' individuals can take.
- Q: How can I stay informed about master plan activities and encourage more people to attend meetings?

A: Our primary means of communicating is via email – so please sign up to receive email updates. Also, tell your neighbors, friends, and colleagues to participate – especially if you know someone who does not have access to a computer. We need all voices at the table to make sure Ellicott City becomes a model resilient community!